

Proposed Gaelic Medium School Catchments for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir-Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy and Nairn Academy

This note advises Community Councils of proposals to be brought forward to create a school catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir-Nis, and to create Gaelic Medium (GM) catchment areas for Dingwall Primary and Millbank Primary, Nairn. At the same time, secondary school GM catchments will be created for Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy and Nairn Academy.

Statutory guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig recommends that local authorities create catchment areas for Gaelic Medium education (GME). The establishment of catchment areas is subject to statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Historically, the lack of defined GM catchments in Highland has meant the criteria for providing transport to GME are not well defined. The minimum distance and road safety criteria are the same as for English Medium education. Because only a minority of schools offer GME, the Council currently has an informal arrangement under which transport to GME can be provided “within reasonable travelling distance”. This has been generally interpreted as meaning up to 15 miles, but there are numerous variations.

Due to the small number of schools offering GME, the Statutory Guidance recommends that GM catchments should overlay a number of EM catchments. There is no compulsion on any pupil to attend GME, and the creation of GM catchments does not affect in any way the existing English Medium catchments.

Subject to the approval of the consultation exercise at a future Education Committee, and to the outcome of the statutory consultation process, the Council proposes:

- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium (GM) catchment area for Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis (BSGI). The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of 33 primary schools, (full list attached). Wherever possible, existing school transport will be used to take children to BSGI.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Dingwall Primary School. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of 19 primary schools, (full list attached). Wherever possible, existing school transport will be used to take children to Dingwall Primary School.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Millbank Primary School. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of 4 primary schools, (full list attached). Wherever possible, existing school transport will be used to take children to Millbank Primary School.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Inverness Royal Academy. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Inverness Royal Academy, Charleston Academy, Culloden Academy, Inverness High School, Millburn Academy, and part of the catchment area of

Fortrose Academy. Wherever possible, existing school transport will be used to take pupils to Inverness Royal Academy.

- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Dingwall Academy. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium catchments of Dingwall Academy and Alness Academy, and part of the catchment of Fortrose Academy. Wherever possible, existing school transport will be used to take pupils to Dingwall Academy.
- To formalise the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) in Nairn Academy, under which the existing catchment area for Nairn Academy will apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education.

Next Steps

The proposal will be submitted to the Council's Education Committee, for approval to be issued as a statutory consultation. This note therefore provides Community Councils with advance notice of the formal consultation. That process will, additionally, provide parents, staff and local residents with multiple opportunities to make their views on the Proposal known.

We would however welcome any comments in advance of the proposal.